

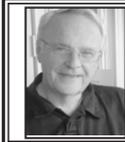
DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Sir,
After being informed a few months back about mercury in the fish in lake Chatuge you have failed to tell us how the mercury got into the water in the first place! Has any follow up of our water been performed or are they just going to continue to let our water be poisoned like with the fluoride and lead???

Sincerely,
Billy Warman



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

I disagree with a lot of things President Woodrow Wilson said and did during his years in public life which I will not list here, but one statement he made is a keeper: "If you will think about what you ought to do for other people, your character will take care of itself."

Alec and Cyndi Threl own a printing company in our town. Whenever we have them do work for us it is done with excellence. But we're convinced that the print shop is only a side line to help fund their real passion - blessing others. Recently we learned that their teenage daughter had just returned from a 6-month mission trip to India where she lived in some pretty primitive conditions helping people in a remote Indian village (a 17-hour bus ride from the nearest airport!). We asked Alec and Cyndi to tell us about their daughter, Ashley, and what had driven her to invest herself in a really tough assignment at a time in her life when most kids are more interested in "me" and Wii. They didn't really have a neat little formula to explain it, but as we have come to know them better we found the answer to our question.

One morning we stepped into their plant and Cyndi seemed more effervescent than usual. When

we asked why she told us that they recently returned from a cruise in the Caribbean. But there was a twist to her story. Rather than the sumptuous food on the trip, or the scenery, or the chance to relax, she wanted to tell us about a side-trip they had taken.

When the ship was docking at a small island off the coast of Honduras they began to inquire of the crew if they knew of anyone on the island they might help. One of the staff knew about an orphanage that had scores of kids and was constantly struggling to provide for them. When Alec and Cyndi went ashore, rather than sight-seeing or heading for the little shops, they found a cab driver who could take them to a place where they could buy inexpensive food. They loaded up the taxi and headed for the orphanage.

I'll long remember Cyndi's account: "I think the highlight of our whole trip was carrying that food up to the orphanage and seeing the joy on the faces of those little kids." Suddenly we understood Ashley's priorities. She had caught it from her mom and dad. It appears Woodrow Wilson got it right.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

There are, perhaps, as many different kinds of people as there are people, and that number today is somewhere around seven billion, but for the purposes of our discussion let's look at two: those who, through choice or circumstance leave family far behind to seek out their destiny, and those who keep the extended family central to their journey through life. Some of us are planets revolving around the central sun of family ties and some are comets.

In my own life I have been both. It is quite natural, even biblical some might say, for a young man or woman to leave father and mother to seek out their own pathways and build their own lives. My journey took me as far away from family as the limits of a small planet would allow on a trajectory determined to escape all family ties. The momentum of youth, the discovery of self and the lure of adventure pushed me outward. Love, support and affection drew me back. Like a planet, my orbit was defined by the balance between these forces.

Our nation of immigrants has seen and continues to see many who left family behind forever to build a new life in a new land. Explorers, pioneers, prospectors, adventurers, missionaries and rogues pushed out the boundaries for all of us. Millions live here now whose only connection to the families of their birth is a phone call, a letter or one of the many electronic pathways that connect our virtual world.

It would be impossible to judge which pathway, the orbit of a planet or the far flung journey of a comet, is the most rewarding. Having spent a great deal of time over the last several years visiting nursing homes, I have heard stories of regret near the end of both paths. Some who chose to cling tightly to family ties regretted the things they might have done but did not and the places they never got to see. Some who chose a life of adventure regretted not spending more time with family and friends.

In truth, however, I have heard more regret expressed over time away from loved ones. The terrible loneliness of living in a nursing home, family scattered around the continent, friends left in the wake of the journey, sur-

rounded by strangers who are also "waiting for God," is palpable. Days spent in loneliness are endless and nights can be terrifying. Holidays can be cruel reminders of what was lost or abandoned.

Technology has enabled our fruitful multiplication into every corner of the planet and in so many ways the touch screen has replaced human touch as the Interstate highway replaced the village. As the support and stability of the extended family in our society has yielded to the ascendancy of the self, the nanny state has grown to fill the needs once satisfied by family and community. It seems to me that the power of government is a poor replacement for the wisdom of a grandfather, the compassion of a grandmother and the camaradery of brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins. The morality, the faith and the maturity once nurtured by family ties has been gradually replaced by rules, regulations and laws - and the coercive power necessary to enforce them. As we lose the ability to govern ourselves, we most certainly will be governed.

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"IT'S ON MY MIND.."
Danny H. Parris

Football, weather and government

The last couple of weeks have been stem winders for football and weather. We have been reminded that life is a mixture of winning and losing. Auburn beat Georgia. Rats! Auburn beat Alabama. Hee! Hee! Florida State beat Auburn. Disgusting! The ACC beating the SEC. Mercy!

Ice, wind, rain and minus zero temperatures here in Blairsville and surrounding North Georgia, unusual. Downed trees, fallen power lines, frozen pipes, surging electrical bills and gas bills. Indeed, this has been one of life's losing seasons for many people. Some folks lost work, thousands lost electrical power temporarily, some lost water, and some lost their houses and cars due to fallen trees. There were some who lost all earthly possessions through house fires. Did you see on TV the couple who had a frozen drain pipe underneath their kitchen sink and when they removed it found a long-lost sapphire and diamond wedding band? They discovered that it belonged to previous tenants of the home. It is now back to the grateful couple in time for their fortieth wedding anniversary.

About four or five years ago I put some items in a "safe place" and they have been lost in that "safe place" for years. Being house bound

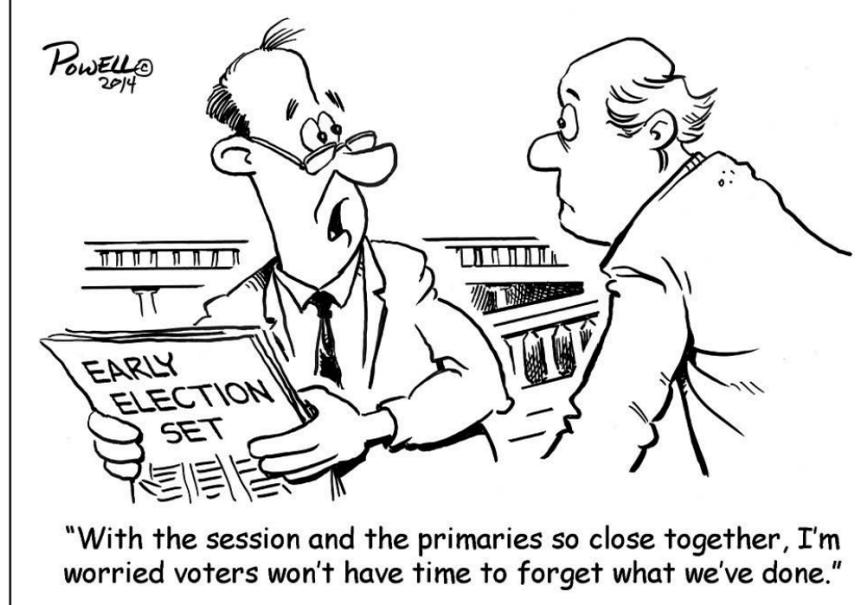
for a few days I found them. Well, football, weather and the government all seem to be out of control, but even some good things happen in losing seasons. The Preacher in Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6 alluded to the winning and losing seasons of life. We think in terms of celebration when we win and crying when we lose. But there are situations when you lose you win.

If you weigh 250 lbs and go on a diet and lose 50 lbs you are not crying but celebrating. Most of our losses are temporary and can be recouped. However, there are some things you don't want to lose.

In my personal opinion it seems that America is at one of its lowest levels in my lifetime. If you can hear, see and feel it is evident that we have lost our moral moorings.

Politically, we have been so disappointed in, and abused by our politicians and leaders that multitudes have lost all faith in our governmental process. Our national debt is depressing for generations to come. Personal and national freedom seems to be eroding quickly before our eyes. As a result some people have become deaf and unaware to what is going on around them. Those that are aware seem to be indifferent.

Spiritually, it seems many have lost their faith in Almighty God. There are masses of intimidating forces against Christianity but God is still on His Throne and He is very much in control. Jesus taught that in order to win you have to lose. Please read, heed, plead and lead others to accept the challenge of Jesus in Mark 8:34-38 for 2014.



Community Calendar

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*
Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.
Mountain Community Seniors meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 1 p.m.
Towns County Democratic Party meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 5 PM at the Senior Center.
Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.
Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.
Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.
School Board Meeting, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.
Hiawassee City Council 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.
Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.
The Hiawassee River Valley Kennel Club meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Restaurant in Murphy. Call Kit: 706-492-5253 or Peggy: 828-835-1082.
The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
Stevens Lodge #414 F & AM meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris.
Towns County Board of Elections holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).
Towns County Historical Society meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA. We do oral family histories

of residents. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org
Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.
Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m., meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Call us by 706-896-0932 or mtregarts-craftsguild.org.
Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Goolsby Center at YHC. Q & A at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
FPL Retirees Breakfast will meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Hole in the Wall Restaurant on the square in Blairsville at 9 a.m.
Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call John at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridge-mountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Mothers of Preschoolers meets the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.
Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.
Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club meets 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.
The Humane Society Mountain Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.
The Towns County Alzheimer's

Support Group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.
The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.
Georgia Mountain Writers Club meets at St. Francis of Assisi Church the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 AM.
GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreek-basketweavers.com.
Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.
Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evenings at 7 PM at the Red Cross building (up the hill from the chamber office on Jack Dayton Circle).
Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.
Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.
VFW Post #7807 will be hosting a fish fry the 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month April - October. \$9. all you can eat from 4:30 - 7 PM.
Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

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Towns County Herald

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